

Dear Sir, Knowing the interest you take in the subject, I send the inclosed for your inspection. I am well aware you will think we have not gone far enough: but we cannot go farther than we see our way, & judge our course to be consistent with duty. Yours truly J.P.

BELFAST, 15th March, 1848.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

Early in the spring of last year, a Letter, of which the following is a copy, was received by the Reverend Doctor Montgomery, with a request that it might be laid before the Friends of Unitarian Christianity in Ireland, in such a manner and at such time as he might deem expedient:—

“ The friends of Unitarian Christianity in Boston to their brethren in a common faith in Ireland.

“ Honoured and Beloved,—It is already known to some of you that the anniversaries of many of our most important societies, religious and charitable, are steadily held during the last week in May, and the anniversary of our American Unitarian Association will be holden this year in Boston on Tuesday, the 25th of that month.

“ We number it among the satisfactions and benefits of these our anniversaries that they assemble from distant places of the land our Christian friends, to reciprocate our views and feelings, to impart information, and to quicken each other in the sacred cause for which we are engaged.

“ We write at the present time to express our earnest wishes that some of you our brethren in Ireland might be present with us on these occasions, and more particularly on that to which we have just referred. And it would give us the highest satisfaction to welcome any of our Unitarian friends, in your own or any other part of the United Kingdom, on this or any future anniversaries, who might be disposed and inclined ‘to come over and help us.’ We can assure to you the heartiest reception that our houses or our hearts, our respect for your characters and sympathy in your labours, can offer.

“ With our most respectful regards to you, we are, Christian brethren,

“ Yours in the bond of our common faith,

“ F. PARKMAN,
CHARLES BROOKS,
J. F. CLARKE, ‘
SAMUEL BARRETT,
A. B. MUZZEY,
ALEXANDER YOUNG,
CHANDLER ROBINS,
E. GANNETT,

GEORGE E. ELLIS,
T. D. HUNTINGTON,
E. PEABODY,
S. K. LOTHROP,
J. J. T. COOLIDGE,
F. T. GRAY,
R. C. WATKINSON.”

This Letter having been laid before a numerous meeting of the Unitarian Ministers at Belfast, in the month of last July, a Committee, consisting of the Rev. Doctor Montgomery, the Rev. Doctor Ledlie, and the Rev. J. Scott Porter was appointed to prepare a suitable reply, with express instructions to embody in it a reference to the wrongs of the Coloured Population in the United States, a grateful acknowledgement of the exertions made by many of the American Unitarian Ministers, living and dead, for the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves; and a respectfully earnest appeal to all Unitarian Ministers in that region, to persevere in benevolent labours for that object.

Of course this cannot be published

Circumstances have not permitted this Committee to meet until the approach of the time when the answer ought to be despatched, so as to be available for the present year's anniversary meetings in Boston; and one of the members being absent, the remaining two have taken it upon them to prepare and forward to you for your consideration, the accompanying draught. If you approve of it, you will please affix your signature, and return it by post, *without loss of time*, to the Rev. J. Scott Porter, 16, College-Square, Belfast. But in case of your not feeling yourself at liberty to sign your name to this paper, it is respectfully suggested that you should express your sentiments in your own words, and forward them, *directly, by post*, in a letter to the Friends of Unitarian Christianity in Boston, addressed to Dr. Parkman, or to some other of the ministers whose names are appended to the invitation.

In case of your adopting this last suggested course, your letter should be posted on or before the 29th instant.

I remain, Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your faithful servant,

J. SCOTT PORTER

Secretary of Committee.

*Sent to S. M. Jr
by Jas. Haughton*

- to whom Mr. Porter had sent it.

*The Undersigned Unitarian Christian Ministers in Ireland, to their
Brethren in a Common Faith, in Boston.*

DEAR AND HONOURED BRETHREN,

Your friendly letter inviting us to send a Deputation of our Members to attend your anniversary Meetings in the month of May, was laid before several of us when assembled upon other business in Belfast, in the latter end of last July: and it was then resolved that an affectionate and respectful answer should be returned. We regret that circumstances have prevented us from preparing and signing this reply until now: and we trust you will excuse the delay which has taken place.

We should have been happy had it been in our power to comply with your kind invitation by sending over one or more of our brethren: as a mark of our unfeigned esteem for the persons from whom the invitation came: as a proof of our sense of the honour done to us in forwarding it: and as a pledge of our earnest desire to reciprocate the friendly feelings in which it originated. We never can forget the great services which the Brethren in America have done to our common cause, not only in their native land, but in this country, by their admirable writings in defence of the pure Gospel of Christ, and by the influence of their religious and moral characters. We cannot doubt that our Deputies, on their return, would have brought with them tidings that would have cheered, strengthened, and guided us in the discharge of the duties of our calling; and it is with regret we feel ourselves precluded from this encouraging and edifying intercourse. But none of us can, at present, be spared from home duties: and there is no method open to us of expressing our views and feelings except by letter. We regret this the more, as a Deputation would have been able to speak to you fully, and without risk of giving offence, upon a subject which is near to our hearts, and which we cannot refrain from mentioning in this communication, though with some apprehension, lest, through a misconception of our motives, we may be thought by some to meet your fraternal overture with coldness or aversion. But as no such feelings are in our breasts, we trust to receive a candid construction while we freely give utterance to sentiments, that, in concert, as we trust, with yourselves, we deeply cherish. You will easily divine that we allude to the wrongs of the Coloured Population in the United States.

We are well acquainted with the exertions made by many of our brethren among the Unitarian Ministers of America, for the emancipation of the slaves and the general improvement of the Negro Race. Not to speak of living men, we know the services done to humanity by the lamented Worcester, Follen, Channing, and Ware: the labours which they undertook, the opposition which they experienced: the temporary odium which they encountered: the enduring honour which they reaped: and the great good which they effected, by their exertions in that field. We rejoice in believing that the desire by which they were actuated, of recovering their enslaved brethren to an enjoyment of the Rights and the Dignity of the Nature conferred upon them by the Great Creator and Father of the Human Race, is shared by the whole body of Unitarian ministers in North America; we rejoice in knowing that very many of them are now actively engaged in labours of various kinds intended to promote this righteous end. We assure you, Brethren, that the tidings of such efforts by any of your number never fail to encourage and to delight us; and that they have always been found to have a highly beneficial effect in advancing the work of religious and moral reform in these lands. We trust that those who have been engaged in such undertakings will persevere in their benevolent enterprise: assured that no faithful and sustained effort to promote the glory of God and the good of man will be without fruit, under a Wise and Merciful Providence:—and we would fondly hope that any among you who may not hitherto have taken that active and prominent part in the great enterprise to which their talents and position in society entitle them,—may see the propriety of throwing themselves more decidedly into the great work, and giving to the cause of the oppressed and the injured the support of their powerful advocacy, their social station, and their personal influence. Do not mistake us, beloved brethren, as wishing by the expression of this hope to insinuate a charge of indifference on your part to the great end in view; our object is the very reverse: we wish to acknowledge the vast service

which the Unitarian ministry in the United States has already done to the cause of Negro Emancipation; and to encourage all who feel the importance of this work, to labour on its behalf, if possible, with even more of energy and perseverance.

We do not presume to dictate the course to be followed for the promotion of the benevolent object. This must be determined by each individual for himself, according to his own view of what is right, in the circumstances in which he is placed. By forming or joining Societies for Negro Emancipation, constituted upon principles of which he personally approves,—by constantly exercising his Rights of Citizenship in such a manner as to advance the cause,—by delivering Discourses from the pulpit,—by sending forth his views through the medium of the Press,—by uniting in Protests and Declarations against the continuance of Slavery, when such are proposed to be adopted by public bodies to which he belongs,—by affixing his name to Documents having the same object, to be sent forth to the public at large,—by conversation in his family circle and in general society, or by other means which will suggest themselves to the thoughtful and conscientious friend of human liberty,—every man will be enabled to express his views and to bear his testimony; and it is for each person to select those methods of doing so which commend themselves to his own judgment as best calculated effectually to advance the cause. But we are sure we shall carry with us the assent of all, when we suggest that no friend to Emancipation can suppose that he does his duty to the cause, by doing nothing for its promotion: still less, by directing the whole of his energy and influence against persons whom he may regard as its injudicious or over-zealous partisans,—while he makes no effort at all, or next to none, to counteract the plans of those who are labouring to perpetuate slavery and to extend its baleful ravages to regions once happily exempted from them.

There is one topic which though not identical with that of slavery is yet related to it, and to which we would respectfully invite the attention of our brethren in America: we allude to the too prevalent practice of denying to the free coloured inhabitants of the United States, the participation of equal Rights and Privileges with their Fellow-citizens, as Members of the Church of Christ. We have been informed that in many churches, coloured persons are not allowed to have vote or voice in the election of officers, or the management of church affairs; that during public worship they are restricted to particular seats, and a particular part of the building;—that when, by purchase or otherwise, they have become entitled to pews in other parts of the edifice, they have not been allowed to use them; and that they have even been refused permission to place themselves at the Lord's Table beside their Fellow-Christians of a different complexion, but are compelled either to abstain from the Lord's Supper, or to assemble themselves together, in order to partake of it, at a different hour from the other members. We need not point out to you, Brethren, how utterly opposed such measures are to the precepts of Christ, and to the spirit of the Gospel; and we trust that Unitarian Christians will show the efficacy of their pure, mild, and comprehensive faith, by discarding, in all their churches, a system of procedure, founded only upon local and temporary prejudice; by which the offices of religion are perverted from a source of comfort to a means of insult; and the church is rendered an instrument for degrading, not elevating, those for whom Christ died.

Dear and Honoured Brethren, we have spoken unto you with much plainness, out of our abounding love towards you; and have even taken it upon us to offer you suggestions which seem to us to be likely to prove of service. Permit us to add, that we expect and earnestly desire you to exercise the same brotherly interest in our behalf: and if, either now or at any future time, there appear to you anything in our circumstances or position which would render a word of encouragement or admonition useful, we trust that your kindness will be shewn in offering to us either, as may appear suitable. You may rely on our receiving with gratitude and meekness, even the word of reproof, from lips so friendly as yours; if you should think it needful to be administered.

And now, Dear and Honoured Brethren, farewell: and may God who has already made you the instruments of so many spiritual blessings to so large a portion of the human race, abundantly bless yourselves with the tokens of his love, and make your labours in the Lord Jesus increasingly useful to his church and to mankind.

We remain, Brethren, Your sincere friends in Christ Jesus,—

Signatures to the A.D. 1848 to American Mr. Garrison

Henry Alexander, Newry.
George A. Armstrong, ^{A.B.} Dublin
Fletcher Blakeley, AM, Moneyrea
Robt Campbell Junr, Newtownlinnady
James Carley AM, Antrim.
William Crozier, AM, Kilmore
William H. Drummond DD, Dublin
William Glendy AM, Ballycarry
David Gordon, Banbridge
John Hall, Ballyclare
William Heron, AM, Ballyclare
George Hill, Crumlin
William Hunter, Bandon
Joseph Hutton M.A. DD, Dublin
James C. Ledlie DD, Dublin
David Maginnis, Belfast
Charles J. McAlister, Holywood
Francis McCammon, Ballymena
John McCaw, Ravara
Alexander McCombe, Bangor
Joseph McFadden, Ballymoney
William O. McGowan, Greyabbey
William B. Minip, Dromore

Henry Montgomery L.D. Dummory
John Montgomery, Banbridge
Hugh Moore, AM, Newtownards
Samuel Moore, Warrenpoint
James Mulligan, Moira
Samuel J. Nelson AM, Downpatrick
James Orr, Clonmell
Alexander Orr, Ballyhemlin
John Orr, Strabane.
Clapan Porter, M.D. St. Lamer
John Porter, Belfast
James N. Porter Carrickfergus
J. Scott Porter, Belfast
Thomas Smyth, Glenaroin
David Watson, AM, Clough
Samuel Watson, AM, Killinichy
William Whitetegge, M.A. Cork.

One Minister, (Mr. Compton
of Ralloo) is dead.

One agrees with the paper
in sentiment but thinks
it injudicious to send it.

From a few I have
not received any answer
up to this 4th Apr. 1848

J.S.P.

